

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement in the 2009-2010 school year. AYP must be certified by the state and all appeals resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take the course.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2003.
6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 or 2009.
7. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
8. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
9. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
10. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT (Questions 1-2 not applicable to private schools)

1. Number of schools in the district: (per district designation)	169	Elementary schools (includes K-8)
	59	Middle/Junior high schools
	44	High schools
	10	K-12 schools
	282	TOTAL

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: 6714

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:

- ☒ Urban or large central city
☐ Suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban area
☐ Suburban
☐ Small city or town in a rural area
☐ Rural

4. 8 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.

5. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school only:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total	Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	50	40	90	6			0
K	55	62	117	7			0
1	58	60	118	8			0
2	56	56	112	9			0
3	58	59	117	10			0
4	50	54	104	11			0
5	58	42	100	12			0
TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL							758

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 1 % Asian
 22 % Black or African American
 17 % Hispanic or Latino
 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 55 % White
 5 % Two or more races
 100 % Total

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 6 %

This rate is calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	18
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	28
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	46
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1.	727
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.063
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	6.327

8. Limited English proficient students in the school: 3 %

Total number limited English proficient 20

Number of languages represented: 7

Specify languages:

Spanish, Creole, Portuguese, Tagalog, Russian, French, Finnish

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 23 %

Total number students who qualify: 176

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-price school meals program, specify a more accurate estimate, tell why the school chose it, and explain how it arrived at this estimate.

10. Students receiving special education services: 11 %

Total Number of Students Served: 81

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u>9</u> Autism	<u>2</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>4</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>13</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>42</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>1</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>10</u> Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>2</u>	<u> </u>
Classroom teachers	<u>41</u>	<u> </u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>5</u>	<u> </u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>18</u>	<u> </u>
Support staff	<u>3</u>	<u> </u>
Total number	<u>69</u>	<u>0</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 19 :1

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. Only middle and high schools need to supply dropout rates. Briefly explain in the Notes section any attendance rates under 95%, teacher turnover rates over 12%, or student dropout rates over 5%.

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Daily student attendance	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
Daily teacher attendance	95%	96%	95%	95%	96%
Teacher turnover rate	6%	6%	14%	10%	9%
Student dropout rate	%	%	%	%	%

Please provide all explanations below.

The high percentage of turnover rate during the 2006-2007 school year was because three teachers relocated out of the area, one teacher did not return because they wanted to stay home with their newborn and two teachers retired.

14. For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools).

Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2009 are doing as of the Fall 2009.

Graduating class size	_____	%
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	_____	%
Enrolled in a community college	_____	%
Enrolled in vocational training	_____	%
Found employment	_____	%
Military service	_____	%
Other (travel, staying home, etc.)	_____	%
Unknown	_____	%
Total	_____	%

PART III - SUMMARY

Innovation and creation at Virginia Shuman Young Montessori Magnet Elementary School (VSY) is inside, outside, and all around! You would not, could not, want to miss spending a day in a school like this! Innovation and creation, woven into the everyday experiences within the VSY Montessori Magnet program, brings learning to life. Step inside VSY and see students actively engaged in classroom lessons that range from the subtropics to the arctic, prehistoric time to future space travel, exploration to the forming of a nation, or anywhere in-between.

VSY is located in downtown Fort Lauderdale and serves 758 Pre-Kindergarten through Fifth grade students. Our school has a culturally diverse enrollment which includes 1% Asian, 22% Black, 17% Hispanic, 54% White and 5% multi-racial. VSY embodies the **vision** of an environment of mutual respect and collaboration amongst and between the staff, students, parents, and community as we meet the individual needs of all learners, instilling a love of learning and respect for the world around us. Our **mission** is to prepare children for lifelong learning by providing a quality, innovative educational foundation based on the Montessori philosophy and methods. Our teachers share a conviction that success in school is directly tied to the degree in which children believe they are capable, independent human beings. Children develop a meaningful degree of independence, they set a pattern for a lifetime of effective work habits, self-discipline, and a sense of responsibility. Students believe in themselves, are engaged in meaningful learning activities, and learn in a safe and equitable environment so they can achieve success.

Learning takes place from when students arrive at school to when they leave our campus. **Upon arrival** to school, students have several opportunities for learning. Students may visit the media center for research, recreational reading opportunities or computer usage. Students meet outside their classroom to engage in learning activities before the morning bell. Once the school day ends, **learning continues after school hours** for many through our after school care program and learning camps.

To maximize learning, **the VSY campus** encompasses several areas for learning. Not only does learning take place within classrooms; but, also extends to outdoor courtyards, the Peace Labyrinth, planting gardens and the media center. Often students from individual classrooms come together to meet for learning opportunities within these environments.

Students, all of whom are members of multi-age classes, are valued and respected members of the school family and experience learning through the physical, emotional, social, and intellectual environment. Multi-age classes have positively impacted achievement at VSY through the modeling that takes place, creation of leadership roles in classroom activities, and continuous learning. Learning is viewed as a partnership with all stakeholders. A greater bond develops between the student, teacher, and parent as students remain with their teacher for a two year cycle. Parents feel more comfortable to discuss specific concerns they may have about their child with a teacher that their child has had for more than one year. Just ask any student and their parent about VSY and they will unequivocally respond with a smile upon their face as they describe a school that is an extension of their family.

Since its inception in 1994, VSY has exceeded the very idea of its creation by infusing the principles of Maria Montessori, while still maintaining the integrity of the Florida Sunshine State Standards. VSY, as a Montessori Magnet, has earned fame for its success in recognizing the uniqueness of each child and the insistence upon allowing children to develop according to individual abilities, interests, and speed within the prepared environment. Being a magnet program, parents county-wide send their children to VSY for a unique educational experience to meet the needs of their child and spark a love for learning. During our 15 year history, VSY has had two administrators who live, work, and model our school mission. The media center is dedicated to the work of VSY's first administrator that led the school from its inception to 2002. After her passing, the current administrator continues to carry the **vision of excellence**. As a whole, the staff is a hardworking group of individuals that permeate an ethos for knowledge as they inspire students to become

lifelong learners. Within the last 5 years, a member of every employee group has been recognized as finalists for county teacher of the year, non-instructional employee of the year, and assistant principal of the year. Additionally, our principal served as principal of the year for Broward County and as a finalist for state elementary principal of the year.

VSY has once again earned a grade of “A” for the tenth straight year that the State Department of Florida has been grading schools. Based on the 2008-2009 data, at 704 points, the Florida Department of Education ranked VSY as the thirteenth highest scoring elementary school in the entire State of Florida. Other accolades include receiving the Best Buy Teach Award in 2006 which is awarded for integrating technology with creativity in the curriculum, the Golden School Award from the Florida Department of Education for Exemplary Volunteer programs for fourteen years and recognition as the 2009 Magnet School of Excellence from the 27th Annual National Conference on Magnet Schools. These milestones are among our proudest achievements.

VSY embodies the simple idea to pay it forward. Over the past 4 years, this mantra has evolved into a pattern of behavior and has become a way of life around the halls of VSY. Pay it forward is entrenched in our day to day learning with members of the VSY family participating in philanthropic acts of kindness that have touched many from a local to global level. From local charitable agencies to the country of India, families in need of a meal, from a student at VSY diagnosed with leukemia to the people of Haiti, our philanthropic acts of kindness have had a positive impact on all involved. VSY was recognized for raising \$5,600 for the Pasta for Pennies Campaign benefitting the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. Students feel a sense of citizenship as they reach out and give to others in need. In the words of Maria Montessori, “Within the child lies the fate of the future.” These are words that we embrace every day at VSY.

Due to our success, the district will replicate our Montessori Magnet Program for the 2010-2011 school year. Success has laid the path; an opportunity for many more students in our county to experience what we have been so privileged to create.

PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. **Assessment Results:**

Students participate in The Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) to measure student performance on benchmarks in Reading, Mathematics, Writing and Science as defined by the Florida Sunshine State Standards. Achievement Levels are based on both scale and developmental scale scores, ranging from 1 being the lowest to 5 being the highest. Level 3 is considered proficient and levels 4 and 5 are advanced. Students scoring at levels 4 and 5 answer most of the test questions correctly, including challenging questions. A student scoring in level 3 answers many of the test questions correctly; but, is generally less successful with questions that are the most challenging. Students scoring in level 2 or 1 have limited success with the challenging content of the Sunshine State Standards and are not considered to be proficient.

Assessment results show that VSY has been successful in moving students in all areas of our diverse population. The data also revealed that there are no significant disparities among subgroups and grade level test scores. Looking at the overall student population, students in every ethnic group have demonstrated learning gains each year.

Over the past five years, students in third and fourth grade have increased their scores in Reading. Fifth grade Reading results increased upward from 2004 through 2007. During 2007-2009, fifth grade assessment results dipped slightly but remain consistent. We also noted that our fifth grade students scoring at advanced levels 4 and 5 showed an increase from 49% to 72% over this same period. This shows that our fifth graders are becoming more proficient in answering challenging content. Our Hispanic students and Special Education students showed both slight increases and decreases throughout the five years, achieving above the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement each year. The 2009 data in Reading revealed that the percentage of students scoring level 3 or higher in grades 3, 4 and 5 were the among the highest of all elementary schools in Broward County.

Trends in Math have shown an upward trend over the last five years in third through fifth grade. We have also noted that in grades 3 and 4, within our ESE population, the scores over the past five years have fluctuated but remain on an overall upward trend. Although our Special Education students showed a decrease in their scores, the students remain above the required criteria for AYP and steps are being taken to remedy this decrease. The 2009 data in Math revealed that the percentage of students scoring level 3 or higher were among the highest in all elementary in Broward County. Our largest gains are among our Hispanic population.

Further analysis of overall scores in both Reading and Math for each grade level, when compared to our school district, Broward County, revealed that we scored substantially higher than the district's average. Third, Fourth and Fifth grade students at VSY scored between ten to twenty-two percentage points higher than the district in both Reading and Math.

As we analyze results over the years, there has been a significant upward trend within the last four years. We attribute this trend to a number of factors. One factor that has a significant impact on student achievement is using technology for better methods of disaggregating and displaying data. As a result, we are better able to identify deficient students and breakdown their deficiency to precise benchmarks in need of remediation. Another factor that has positively impacted the increase in scores can be attributed to data conferences with instructional staff, support staff, and administration as students are more closely monitored. Discussion during "data chats" focus on instructional decisions such as how the data impacts lesson planning and instructional delivery and what methods of instruction will be used to have the greatest impact on student's learning. Data conferences also assist with monitoring students and discussing student's progress.

Information on the state assessment system came from the State website which can be accessed at <http://www.fcatfldoe.org>.

2. Using Assessment Results:

Assessment is an integral part of the Montessori Method as teachers observe students daily interacting with the materials and record their mastery of the process. Aligning with the Florida Continuous Improvement Model, there is an ongoing system in place of diagnosing strengths and abilities and prescribing appropriate activities from remediation to enrichment. Teachers create Progress Monitoring Plans (PMPs) for students with deficiencies to assist with monitoring their academic performance. Informal methods of assessment include teacher observation, rubrics, and student-generated projects and presentations. These projects are in keeping with the Montessori curriculum and methods. As a result, instructional strategies are differentiated to the needs of students to improve instruction in the classroom.

Assessment methods are aligned with the school's vision/mission and curriculum by approaching test-taking as an integral part of the practical life. Formal assessments are viewed as diagnostic tools for improving curriculum delivery, programs and teaching techniques. These can include, but are not limited to, reading running records, reading inventories, writing rubrics, Broward County Benchmark Assessment Test (BAT), and the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT).

Student assessment results are analyzed and used to make decisions regarding classroom teaching strategies and the staff's needs for professional development. Students in grade 4 and 5 analyze their data and develop their own individual "SGPs," or "Student Growth Plans." With the teacher as their guide, they are able to define their own individual goals by completing periodic self-evaluations and portfolios in order to take ownership of their learning. Classroom test data and specific student concerns are discussed with members of support staff (Guidance, ESE and Reading Specialists, and Montessori Program Coordinator) and administration during quarterly data conferences with each teacher. Reflecting on assessment results has bred a culture of understanding of interpreting data and applying the results to better meet the needs of our students.

3. Communicating Assessment Results:

Teachers at VSY communicate student performance to parents in a variety of ways. Daily planners, conferences, graded work samples, and myriad interim assessments ensure that teachers keep parents well informed regarding student progress. They also suggest useful strategies to implement when working with their children at home, so parental involvement remains at an optimum level.

The leadership team comprised of school-administration, team leaders, and support staff, join together to identify how the Montessori curriculum can better meet the needs of all students. Continual analysis of data aid in individualization and an action plan is formulated. In this way, all stakeholders gain a deeper understanding of their role in the academic growth of children. The School's Advisory Council (S.A.C.), including administrators, a union representative, members from each grade level, community stakeholders, and school partners, meet monthly to discuss different ways to improve student achievement without focusing solely on testing.

VSY communicates assessment results to their students through conferencing and student growth plans. Teachers discuss assessment results during vertical and horizontal team meetings and professional learning communities. By conducting or attending these meetings teachers ensure students remain apprised of their individual strengths and weaknesses. The teachers also highlight benchmarks and strands needed for individual growth.

VSY communicates student performance to the community through school and classroom newsletters which are sent to parents by either e-mail or hardcopy. Administrators share school successes at the school's zone

meetings, S.A.C. meetings, Parent Teacher Association (P.T.A.) meetings, and through school partnerships. This ensures all community stakeholders receive up-to-date information regarding the successes and accolades that VSY has earned consistently through years of high student achievement. The school's marquee communicates events and upcoming activities to the surrounding neighborhood.

4. Sharing Success:

Currently the only public Montessori school in Broward County, we are one of the most successful elementary schools, according to standardized testing, in the state of Florida. We have earned these accolades through hard work and dedication to the Montessori philosophy. Part of this philosophy is collaborative learning and it is ingrained in our pedagogy as well as being part of our school platform.

Our success is shared collaboratively with neighboring schools. We work closely with Walker Elementary, our partner school, sharing best practices and effective instructional strategies. In the past 2 years, we have done the same with other district schools. Educators of varied practice and experience come to our school to observe, to gain insight into some best practices that are occurring throughout our school. Partnerships evolve through sharing success as our principal has been assigned as a mentor to new principals of Title 1 and magnet schools. With the current program replication expansion of School C Montessori Magnet, we are working closely with the principal and Magnet Coordinator to ensure the fidelity of program replication and success.

Best practices are also shared through teachers presenting at conferences, offering workshops for teachers, paraprofessionals, and parents. VSY staff members have presented nationally at the annual National American Montessori Society conference as well. During Summer Academies, teachers present to other teachers and share their successes. Parent trainings are ongoing throughout the year at our school so parents can better understand the curriculum and support their child's education. Our Reading Specialist has held numerous parent trainings on topics such as the importance of reading with your child, how to help your child get ready for standardized testing, reading strategies, and the reading and writing connection.

Newsletters are posted online and circulate through neighboring zone schools. This allows other schools to see what we are doing and how well it works. Several of our teachers have been videotaped teaching successful lessons integrating technology. These recordings have been put on our district's website for teachers across the district to access as well as being available on iTunes U. Technology allows us to reach educators on a global level.

Our school has a Magnet Open House annually that is open to the public. This allows us to share what we do with the education community as well as with families of prospective students. The students share lessons and projects and the visitors get to observe these practices, as well as tour our school. Each year we also promote and highlight our schools achievements at the Broward County Magnet Showcase. This event allows parents to get information about prospective schools and learn about each Magnet program offered in our district.

PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum:

The curriculum at VSY is unique. It **integrates** the goals of Florida’s Sunshine State Standards with the Montessori curriculum. At VSY we develop lifelong learners within a program that nurtures independence and choice. Instruction is delivered by differentiating the curriculum to meet the needs of the individual learner. Teachers are the facilitators, directing students towards lessons that challenge their individual growth **using a variety of materials and approaches** while simultaneously creating an atmosphere that fosters creativity and respect for student interests.

As a Montessori school, curriculum is based on several important concepts as students move continuously from concrete to abstract understanding in their learning. Freedom to learn is a central theme in all classrooms. **Learning is differentiated** and activities are rich and engaging. There are ample opportunities for hands-on, active learning that bring the child to a deeper understanding of concepts across learning domains. Children select work that captures their interest although teachers help them to choose activities that will present new challenges and areas of inquiry. The teacher is not the “sage on the stage” but rather the “guide on the side”, expertly preparing the Montessori environment for success, reflection, and self-correction.

The curriculum at VSY uses an **integrated thematic approach** that ties the separate disciplines of the curriculum together into three main areas of learning: the physical universe, the world of nature and the human experience. Literature, mathematics, history, social science, science, the arts and the study of technology all complement one another. The curriculum promotes **research as a tool for learning**. Our media center serves as our information hub with our media specialist as the leader of technology integration. Collaboration is a key theme in building partnerships in information-based learning that engages a community of learners. Students learn media, information literacy skills and integrate technology into projects through collaborative lessons with the media specialist and teacher.

Students are engaged in **reading lessons** and activities on a daily basis. **Guided reading** groups utilize a variety of materials including basal readers, Junior Great Books, specific novel selections for literature circles, fiction, non-fiction resources, **Science and Social Studies** texts and research articles from various resources. Classes participate in shared readings, read-a-loud, silent reading and Book Buddies to elevate the reading experience. Use of interactive white boards, document cameras and class projectors allow teachers and students to share literacy as they **integrate technology** from multiple sources.

All classes engage in **writing** across learning domains. Lessons emphasizing the six traits of writing, focus, organization, word choice, voice, sentence fluency and conventions, through the writing process are presented in a multitude of writing forms at each developmental level. Word study, grammar and vocabulary enrichment are paramount to the language arts curriculum. The **five strands of mathematical learning**, number concepts, measurement, geometry algebraic thinking, data analysis and probability, are emphasized in all classes utilizing a multitude of Montessori materials and mathematical tools, both physical and digital. Working for a peaceful community, **global studies and history** are central to our curriculum. Lessons are implemented in cosmological, geological and human history. The **sciences** span the gamut of human inquiry: physical science, biology and geology. The **scientific process** is emphasized through experiments and discovery learning that stimulate the student’s scientific thinking.

Learning through the **visual and performing arts** is an integral part of the day for students. Students receive instruction through a scheduled rotation to deepen concepts taught within the arts. Serving as an extension of the classroom, special area teachers promote hands-on learning and utilize the same methodology as classroom teachers for curriculum delivery. The curriculum includes scientific problem solving, a six-level

language-development curriculum, creating art using a wide variety of mediums, learning and internalizing key musical concepts at students' own developmental level. Students showcase learning through performance opportunities provided during the course of the year including Arts Alive – a showcase of the visual and performing arts, Academic/Science Fair, Spanish Competition, concerts, and recitals.

2a. (Elementary Schools) Reading:

(This question is for elementary schools only)

Being a Montessori School, we use a variety of instructional tools to meet our diverse population, while maintaining high expectations for all students. The reading curriculum at VSY is built around the Sunshine State Standards. Within each class, teachers assess and then place students in flexible, fluid groups according to their instructional level. While differentiating instruction, teachers utilize a wide range of materials, including the county adopted basal series, leveled readers, Junior Great Books and trade books. For direct reading instruction, teachers focus on the 5 essential components of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension.

In accordance with the Montessori Method, beginning readers start with concrete materials; these materials may include, sandpaper letters, object boxes, and the movable alphabet. At this level, students are primarily assessed through teacher observation. In the upper levels, however, data is utilized from previous Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) scores for grades three through five, present year Benchmark Assessment Test (BAT) scores and classroom assessments. Scores are analyzed for trends across individual classrooms, grade levels, and ultimately school wide. Administration, support staff, teachers, and grade level teams then identify the strengths along with the weaknesses of the students. Skill groups are formed from this data. Skill specific remediation groups take place within the classroom while still moving forward on an overall curriculum. Additionally, students identified as possibly deficient in reading overall attend after school tutorial FCAT camps to enhance skill levels. The primary focus is to ensure that all students become strategic readers. Reading strategies such as, re-reading, clarifying, thinking about the big picture and monitoring for comprehension are modeled by the teacher, then practiced and refined by the students. By using these strategies, students are able to understand and gain greater meaning from the texts they read, whether it is fiction, non-fiction, poems, journals, directions, or even recipes.

3. Additional Curriculum Area:

As the mission statement reads, “Students develop a lifelong love of learning through a quality and innovative educational experience based on the philosophy of Dr. Montessori.” Our school can lay claim to the utilization of Dr. Montessori’s methods as our basic foundation and establishes the student’s love of mathematics as they intrinsically absorb new concepts, while building upon prior concepts. This is done through the use of the Montessori curriculum and the high-level material it integrates into everyday learning, including hands-on materials such as the addition and subtraction strip boards and multiplication and division bead boards. Students see concepts through the use of these and are then able to abstract them to help them perform and answer real life questions. The Montessori Method of instruction was designed to provide children with opportunities to explore their environment and encourages children to select independent, yet challenging work. All mathematics lessons are designed in sequential order and concepts are introduced to the individual children after they have mastered the previous skills. This creates a classroom environment containing many levels of instruction occurring simultaneously. The hands-on materials, coupled with the lessons, allow students to truly comprehend how and why math concepts relate to real-life experiences. They are not merely giving answers through rote memorization, but developing a sense of understanding of various mathematic concepts. Through the use of hands-on materials, children progress from concrete to the abstract, ultimately applying principles previously learned to testing situations, as well as in everyday life. Rather than merely teaching a prescribed curriculum or set program, high student performance expectations are set for learning through Montessori learning experience to meet individual needs and address varied levels of proficiency. Sunshine State Standards tell educators where to take students, Montessori methods serve as the

core instruction of delivery, and indicators show their progress along the way. It is through this journey of standards-based learning that VSY is transforming education, teaching, and learning one student at a time.

4. Instructional Methods:

A key component of the Montessori Philosophy is educating the whole child through the use of differentiated instruction and teachers are guided by general principles of individualization. These may include flexible grouping, understanding students' goals and learning styles, on-going assessments and adjustment of curriculum, integration of technology, and a positive learning environment. Teachers are proactive and maintain student-centered classrooms, blending whole group, small group, and individual instruction. Students in the Exceptional Student Education (ESE) program identified as having a need for Special Education services are generally placed in co-teaching classrooms with a general education teacher and an ESE teacher, who work together to meet the individual needs of all the students.

Teachers meet on a monthly basis in vertical curriculum teams to discuss strategies, best practices, and current trends to align the instructional focus throughout all grade levels. Data conferences are scheduled, but not limited to, three times a year with administration and support staff to discuss and review student data and to monitor the progress of all students. During these conferences, as a collaborative team, we are able to not only analyze the data but brainstorm interventions to ensure that all students show growth. Students identified as not making adequate yearly progress are provided additional small group instruction by the Reading Specialist as well as from other support staff members.

Curriculum is extended after school hours for students in need of enrichment through after school camps and the after school program. These camps target students identified as part of the socio-economically disadvantaged subgroup as well as students identified as being non-proficient. Instruction provided through these camps allows students an additional opportunity to experience a hands-on curriculum that focuses on Reading, Math, and Science.

Struggling students are monitored through the use of the Response to Intervention (RtI) model. Teachers and support staff work together to use a tiered model to implement interventions within the classroom. These strategies have proven to be effective in improving student learning and achievement across all subgroups. For students that meet and exceed grade level expectations, the curriculum is individualized allowing not only vertical enrichment but for horizontal enrichment as well. Project-based learning opportunities are provided to deepen understanding of concepts in all grade levels. Additionally, cross grade level collaboration provides myriad of opportunities for students throughout the school.

5. Professional Development:

Professional development at VSY builds a positive school culture promoting continuous learning for all. It is designed to bring about systemic change in educational practice and ensure quality teaching. Articulating a clear vision and beginning with the end in mind permits for the creation of goals that aid in successful professional development experiences. Stakeholders including faculty and School Advisory Council members craft a professional development action plan based on student performance data needs, teacher input including needs assessment surveys, along with classroom walk-through patterns. For example, a recent training focused on the integration of technology using the Promethean board. This training was a direct result from classroom walk-through patterns that showed a need to engage students and facilitate inquiry-based instruction. After implementing strategies gained in the classroom, teachers reported that students became active participants in lessons and showed increased enthusiasm.

All professional development is ongoing and job-embedded. At staff meetings, subject area committees share best practices and train staff on innovative strategies supporting Montessori methods. VSY embraces a team-based collaborative form of professional development by sharing best practices during team meetings. Teams share innovative best practices reflecting on successful teaching experiences. After utilizing best practices

shared in the classroom, teachers discuss reflection results of implementing innovative ideas into classroom lessons strengthening the teaching and learning process.

Additionally, staff participates in learning communities including Promethean Users and Wired Up Wednesdays. Both focus on integrating technology to meet 21st century students' needs. Topics covered include integrating technology, using 21st century tools, resources in lessons, Internet usage teaching digital citizenship, communication, and effective research skills.

Lastly, teachers teach other teachers through peer-coaching. As coaches, teachers assist peers in identifying ways to enhance standards-based instruction, further engage students in technology-rich learning activities, and model effective teaching strategies. Peer coaching encourages reflection, analysis of teaching practice, fosters a positive school culture, impacts lesson improvement or redesign, and maximizes student achievement.

Professional development opportunities ensure that learning is continuous and ongoing. Participation impacts teachers' behavior in the classroom through the application of innovative strategies into learning activities and the integration of technology into the curriculum. Furthermore, direct results of our professional development program are demonstrated through student achievement evidenced by an increase in student usage of 21st century technology tools and engagement in learning.

6. School Leadership:

An Instructional and Servant Leader, our principal, along with the support staff, are available to assist teachers with curriculum, teacher-student and teacher-parent communication. They model lessons, guide curriculum, and assist with pertinent concerns and issues. A Leadership Team of administrators, Support Staff, and grade level team leaders meet monthly to discuss policies, programs, relationships, and resources for improving student achievement. The Leadership Team also focuses on specific needs of the teachers, students' needs and helps guide the curriculum to maintain an instructional focus.

Our principal plays a key role in analyzing school-wide data. He has taught staff members how to access and interpret various data and then develop plans to create meaningful learning situations for students. Through a collaborative effort, he empowers staff to make instructional decisions that directly impact student achievement. He has taught and then required teachers to create both vertical and horizontal individualized plans to meet the needs of all students. He has established curriculum learning communities for all subject areas, allowing for collaboration and input infusing standards-based learning with Montessori methods across grade levels.

Through a variety of structures and activities, our principal encourages staff in furthering their education to become leaders in their field. Teachers are supported to be participants and presenters at educational conferences and on-site staff developments, to serve as mentors to other teachers, and to provide parent trainings. He has encouraged paraprofessionals to attend classes to further their certification thus enhancing our school culture. These practices are beneficial to all stakeholders and further bolster our school's leadership position within the school district.

Every day, our principal is on morning announcements reminding students of our core tenets and encouraging them to have a "Magnificent Montessori Day." Every Tuesday, on our televised program for students, he embraces a topic in the "Tuesday Talk with Administration" that fosters a community of learners.

Each year, the principal embraces a different theme for staff development that encourages teachers to think differently and to take positive action within their profession. Our principal encourages teachers to be risk takers and attempt new instructional methods to bring education to life. He empowers the staff to take on additional responsibilities and implement new ideas to keep the school functioning most effectively while remaining a leader in educational innovation.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 3

Test: FCAT

Edition/Publication Year: 2005-2009 Publisher: The Administrator Assessment And School Performance

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Level 3 & above	95	92	90	91	72
Level 4 & 5	81	66	60	56	41
Number of students tested	109	106	114	120	128
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
Level 3 & above	88	78	79	74	46
Level 4 & 5	65	44	43	33	17
Number of students tested	26	18	19	27	35
2. African American Students					
Level 3 & above	89	88	79	79	57
Level 4 & 5	47	54	48	28	17
Number of students tested	19	24	19	29	35
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Level 3 & above	100		87	85	50
Level 4 & 5	88		47	46	10
Number of students tested	12	8	15	13	10
4. Special Education Students					
Level 3 & above	75	82	100		
Level 4 & 5	50	53	57		
Number of students tested	12	17	16	9	8
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
Level 3 & above					
Level 4 & 5					
Number of students tested	2	3	3	3	6
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
Level 3 & above	96	97	94	97	85
Level 4 & 5	88	70	64	71	61
Number of students tested	68	63	69	66	71

Notes:

6 Largest Subgroup- White

Subject: Reading

Grade: 3

Test: FCAT

Edition/Publication Year: 2005-2009 Publisher: The Administrator Assessment And School Performance

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Level 3 or Above	92	91	92	90	74
Level 4 & Level 5	75	65	67	59	46
Number of students tested	110	106	114	120	128
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
Level 3 or Above	77	72	74	70	69
Level 4 & Level 5	47	56	37	26	34
Number of students tested	26	18	19	27	35
2. African American Students					
Level 3 or Above	79	83	79	69	60
Level 4 & Level 5	37	37	58	38	29
Number of students tested	19	24	19	29	35
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Level 3 or Above	92		87	100	70
Level 4 & Level 5	75		33	54	30
Number of students tested	12	8	15	13	10
4. Special Education Students					
Level 3 or Above	58	71	88		
Level 4 & Level 5	34	65	69		
Number of students tested	12	17	16	9	8
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
Level 3 or Above					
Level 4 & Level 5					
Number of students tested	2	3	3	3	6
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
Level 3 or Above	94	100	96	95	85
Level 4 & Level 5	82	79	77	68	58
Number of students tested	69	63	69	66	71

Notes:

#6- Largest Subgroup not listed above is the White Subgroup.

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 4

Test: FCAT

Edition/Publication Year: 2005-2009 Publisher: The Administrator Assessment And School Performance

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Feb
SCHOOL SCORES					
Level 3 & above	95	94	92	88	86
Level 4 & 5	81	67	50	58	51
Number of students tested	108	111	109	112	112
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
Level 3 & above	95	85	71	72	85
Level 4 & 5	74	33	36	32	30
Number of students tested	19	27	28	25	33
2. African American Students					
Level 3 & above	90	81	68	76	78
Level 4 & 5	80	43	36	38	19
Number of students tested	29	21	28	29	36
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Level 3 & above	80	100	100		73
Level 4 & 5	70	50	41		45
Number of students tested	10	14	12	9	11
4. Special Education Students					
Level 3 & above	81	100	80	70	82
Level 4 & 5	69	61	30	60	27
Number of students tested	16	13	10	10	11
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
Level 3 & above					
Level 4 & 5					
Number of students tested	3	2	2	4	5
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
Level 3 & above	100	98	100	92	95
Level 4 & 5	83	79	62	69	70
Number of students tested	62	64	57	66	57

Notes:

#6 Largest Subgroup-White

Subject: Reading

Grade: 4

Test: FCAT

Edition/Publication Year: 2005-2009 Publisher: The Administrator Assessment And School Performance

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Level 3 & above	95	91	86	85	87
Level 4 & 5	71	64	55	57	53
Number of students tested	108	111	109	112	112
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
Level 3 & above	95	74	68	84	76
Level 4 & 5	52	37	36	32	33
Number of students tested	19	27	28	25	33
2. African American Students					
Level 3 & above	93	81	64	76	75
Level 4 & 5	55	52	40	34	30
Number of students tested	29	21	28	29	36
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Level 3 & above	80	86	92		91
Level 4 & 5	50	43	41		54
Number of students tested	10	14	12	9	11
4. Special Education Students					
Level 3 & above	81	100	80	70	82
Level 4 & 5	69	55	30	50	27
Number of students tested	16	13	10	10	11
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
Level 3 & above					
Level 4 & 5					
Number of students tested	3	2	2	4	5
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
Level 3 & above	98	97	96	92	91
Level 4 & 5	84	72	60	69	70
Number of students tested	62	64	57	66	57

Notes:

#6- Subgroup- White

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 5

Test: FCAT

Edition/Publication Year: 2005-2009 Publisher: The Administrator Assessment And School Performance

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Level 3 or Above	90	90	81	85	79
Level 4 & Level 5	74	67	58	48	48
Number of students tested	107	106	100	99	103
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
Level 3 or Above	71	70	58	73	71
Level 4 & Level 5	33	54	37	47	42
Number of students tested	21	30	24	30	24
2. African American Students					
Level 3 or Above	76	67	69	74	62
Level 4 & Level 5	57	51	42	42	35
Number of students tested	21	27	26	35	26
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Level 3 or Above	100	100			85
Level 4 & Level 5	69	66			35
Number of students tested	13	12	7	8	20
4. Special Education Students					
Level 3 or Above	100			70	55
Level 4 & Level 5	70			40	18
Number of students tested	10	9	9	10	11
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
Level 3 or Above					
Level 4 & Level 5					
Number of students tested	1	2	1	5	3
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
Level 3 or Above	95	98	88	94	84
Level 4 & Level 5	81	73	73	71	59
Number of students tested	60	57	60	48	51

Notes:

#6 Largest Subgroup- White

Subject: Reading

Grade: 5

Test: FCAT

Edition/Publication Year: 2005-2009 Publisher: The Administrator Assessment And School Performance

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Level 3 & above	88	89	92	91	83
Level 4 & 5	72	49	63	56	44
Number of students tested	107	106	100	99	103
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
Level 3 & above	58	77	88	83	63
Level 4 & 5	34	23	38	43	30
Number of students tested	25	30	24	30	24
2. African American Students					
Level 3 & above	67	67	81	80	69
Level 4 & 5	48	33	42	40	23
Number of students tested	21	27	26	35	26
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Level 3 & above	77	100			
Level 4 & 5	46	25			
Number of students tested	13	12	7	7	8
4. Special Education Students					
Level 3 & above	90			80	36
Level 4 & 5	50			30	27
Number of students tested	10	8	9	10	11
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
Level 3 & above					
Level 4 & 5					
Number of students tested	1	2	1	5	3
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
Level 3 & above	97	96	98	96	88
Level 4 & 5	83	58	78	67	52
Number of students tested	60	57	60	48	51

Notes:

#6 Largest Subgroup- White